



ROBERT C. GATES, Director

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
313 N. Figueroa, Los Angeles, CA 90012

Refer reply to: Toxics Epidemiology Program
2615 South Grand Ave., Room 607
Los Angeles, CA 90007
Office (213) 744-3235
FAX (213) 744-3858

**RESULTS OF LEAD SCREENING SURROUNDING
KING NEPTUNE SUPERFUND SITE, BELL GARDENS, CA
MAY 29, 1992**

In April, 1992, our office was contacted by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) regarding an emergency superfund site located in Bell Gardens, King Neptune Manufacturers. King Neptune Manufacturers (6612 Clara Ave.) has been operating as a lead smelter since 1955. The EPA identified lead contamination off-site in the environmental samples taken from access areas and easements adjacent to the King Neptune Property. The EPA and the ATSDR jointly requested the LAC-DHS's Toxics Epidemiology Program conduct an investigation into the blood lead levels of the children in the immediately surrounding neighborhood.

On May 8, 1992, staff surveyed the neighborhood, and identified 45 residences in the EPA notification area surrounding the site. This neighborhood comprises approximately 50% light industrial, and 50% housing, mostly low-income. On May 11 and 12th, investigators went door-to-door visiting these residences, informing the residents of the EPA's activities, and offering the residents free blood-lead screening for children seven years of age and under and pregnant women. These investigators comprised of two teams of two, each including a public health nurse and a Spanish translator. There were 43 homes visited (including garage apartments), and 56 potential candidates for lead screening identified. Residences for which no occupants could be reached on either of the two days had materials left on the door-step or with a neighbor. Materials distributed included a Health Advisory by the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services' Toxics Epidemiology Program (TEP), the EPA's news letter on the King Neptune Site, and some general literature on lead in the environment. All material was provided in both English and Spanish.

On May 13 and 15th, a lead screening van was parked in front of the Ford Adult School (only 2 blocks from the King Neptune Site) for the hours of 1:00 p.m. through 6:00 p.m. The van was staffed by a pediatric phlebotomist and the van manager. Funding for the van and the laboratory analysis was provided by the California Department of Health Services' Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program. While children seven years old or younger and pregnant women were the targets of our lead screening program, some additional children and adults were tested. Older children were tested due to confusion about their ages at the time of the testing, and sometimes in an effort to reduce the overall fear level of the parents. Several female adults of child bearing age were tested due to the potential for uncertainty about their being pregnant. Several adults residing on or immediately adjacent to the superfund site were also tested, as well as a few other concerned adults.

J5/14/92

18

EPA REG 9

002

United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

Regional Administrator
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

Region 9
Arizona, California
Hawaii, Nevada
Pacific Islands



Environmental News

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 14, 1992

Contact: Dave Schmidt, U.S. EPA
(415) 744-1578

U.S. EPA STARTS SUPERFUND CLEANUP OF BELL GARDENS LEAD SMELTER

(San Francisco)--The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) today announced an emergency cleanup and removal of lead-contaminated waste at the King Neptune Industries lead smelter at 6612 Clara St., Bell Gardens, Los Angeles County, Calif. The smelter, which was illegally operated without any pollution control devices, is inside a building in the backyard of a single family house, in a mixed residential and commercial neighborhood.

"This lead smelter poses an unacceptable health risk to residents of the homes and apartments surrounding it, especially young children," said Jeff Zelikson, director of hazardous waste management for U.S. EPA's western region. "This cleanup is an excellent example of how the federal Superfund law works quickly to safeguard public health when the need is urgent."

A preliminary assessment of the site conducted by U.S. EPA found lead dust covering indoor surfaces in the smelter building at concentrations more than 500 times higher than the threshold level that defines hazardous waste under state law. Lead levels in yards and an alley near the building ranged up to 11 times higher than the threshold level.

Exposure to high levels of lead can damage the brain and kidneys in children as well as adults. Children are especially at risk, however, because they are more sensitive to lead poisoning, and they are more likely to ingest soil and dust than adults. Exposure of pregnant women to lead can result in abortion, or giving birth to children with reduced birth weight, reduced growth, and reduced intelligence.

The Los Angeles County Department of Health Services has issued an advisory recommending that young children and pregnant women who have lived or spent a great deal of time near the site should get a blood test for lead poisoning. Free blood testing was available in the neighborhood on Wednesday afternoon at the Department's medical van. Fifty-nine people came for the test. Free lead testing will be available again on Friday May 15, from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. The van will again be parked in front of the Anson Ford Adult School and Park. For further information on lead testing, residents may call Philip Jacobs of the Department of Health Services, at 213-744-3235.

(more)



ROBERT C. GATES, Director

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
313 N. Figueroa, Los Angeles, CA 90012

PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

IMPORTANT HEALTH ADVISORY ABOUT LEAD POISONING

May 11, 1992

To: Residents of Bell Gardens, in the neighborhood surrounding *King Neptune Manufacturers*, 6612 Clara St.:

The Health Department has learned that an illegal business in your neighborhood (King Neptune Manufacturers at 6612 Clara Street) is contaminated with lead, and may have contaminated nearby homes and yards as well. Special workers from the United States Environmental Protection Agency will start to clean-up the site this week. The clean-up will take about four weeks. Meanwhile, keep your children from playing next to this yard.

Is there a health problem for you or your neighbors? We do not know for sure, but we are worried that young children or pregnant women living next to this property for a long time may have been overexposed to lead. Some residents might even have lead poisoning and need to see a doctor. For young children and for fetuses in the womb, too much lead can permanently affect the brain and interfere with growth and learning, even without obvious symptoms. However, if the lead exposure is corrected at an early stage, the child will almost always have no permanent health problems from lead.

The Health Department recommends that children or pregnant women from the homes closest to this property get a blood test for lead. Even if you or your family feel fine, we still recommend this test if you have spent much time in the immediately adjacent area. This test is simple and important, and requires a small amount of blood drawn from the arm. The only way to detect lead poisoning early is to have a blood test.

What should people in this neighborhood do? In order to make it easy for pregnant women and children in your neighborhood to get a blood test for lead, we will be providing free blood lead testing in your neighborhood on May 13 and 15th (Wednesday and Friday), in the afternoons from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Our medical van will be parked in front of Ford Adult School. **This is the only time we will be able to bring our medical people for free lead testing to your neighborhood, so please be sure to arrange for this now.** Of course, you are welcome to see your regular physician for this test. You can take this form to your child's doctor and ask for a blood lead test as part of the child's checkup. If you would like your child to see a doctor on your own but cannot afford a physician, please call (310) 603-5141 to see if you are eligible and to arrange a free checkup for your child.

Should everyone in the neighborhood get tested for lead poisoning? Not necessarily. This health advisory is only for pregnant women and young children living closest to 6612 Clara Street or who have spent a great deal of time next to this illegal business. It does not affect other adults in the area or adults and children attending Ford Adult School and Park.

Who to talk to if you have questions? For more information about blood lead testing or medical questions, call the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services at (213) 744-3235. For more information about the clean-up work being done at King Neptune manufactures call (800) 231-3075. There will be people in your neighborhood from our office and the EPA to answer your questions, during May 11-15, 1992. We will be happy to answer your questions, so please feel free to come up and talk to us.

REMEMBER:

**YOUNG CHILDREN AND PREGNANT WOMEN IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD
SHOULD GET A BLOOD TEST FOR LEAD SOON!**

Thank you for your attention to this important health message!



UNITED STATES
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

U.S. EPA, Region IX, 75 Hawthorne Street, San Francisco, CA 94105

Bell Gardens, CA

May 1992

EPA TO CONDUCT REMOVAL ACTION IN BELL GARDENS, CA

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will conduct a removal action at the King Neptune Lead Smelter in Bell Gardens, CA. The action is scheduled to begin May 12 and take about four weeks to complete. The site is located in a mixed residential and industrial area on Clara Street near Florence Avenue. EPA will be removing an estimated 220 cubic yards of contaminated soil from the property and surrounding areas.

The King Neptune company has operated as a lead smelter in Bell Gardens since 1955. The lead smelting is conducted inside a large building in the backyard of a single family residence. The company obtains most of its lead for smelting in the form of lead pigs from hospitals and medical centers. Lead pigs are used by hospitals and medical centers to store and transport radioactive isotopes for cancer treatment and radiation diagnosis. Additional sources of lead smelting include automotive wheel weights and scrap batteries. Molten lead was used by the company to make SCUBA diving and fishing weights.

As a result of the lead smelting activities, the large building and the property's soils are heavily contaminated with lead. Lead samples taken in the alley and parkway have revealed lead contamination off-site. In December 1991, the County Fire Department condemned the smelter for violation of the Uniform Fire Code.

In March 1992, EPA conducted a preliminary assessment of the site. A total of 26 samples were collected from on-site and off-site locations. The sampling confirmed that the building was highly contaminated with lead. Soil surface lead contamination was also confirmed in the backyard, in the alley and in the parkway alongside the street. Seven of the 10 surface soil samples collected in the backyard exceeded the California Total Threshold Level Concentration (TTLC) for lead. The TTLC is a state standard used to designate when a substance containing lead is a hazardous waste.

LA EPA EMPIEZARA UN ACCION EMERGENTE EN BELL GARDENS, CA

La Agencia del Proteccion del Medio Ambiente (EPA) empezará la limpieza del sitio King Neptune en Bell Gardens, CA. Esta limpieza empezará el 12 de mayo y tomará cuatro semanas para completar. El sitio está ubicado en un vecindario residencial y industrial en la calle Clara cerca la Avenida Florence. EPA sacará unas 220 yarda cubicas de tierra contaminado del sitio y las areas cercanas.

La compania King Neptune ha operado en Bell Gardens desde 1955. La compania derretia plomo dentro un edificio en el patio de una casa residencial. La compania recibia el plomo de hospitales en la forma de "lead pigs" que se usan para transportar materiales radioactivas. Se recibia plomo tambien de ruedas de automobiles y de desperdicios de baterias. El plomo se usaba para fabricar pesas de pescar y de buseo.

Un resultado de estas actividades es que los edificios y la tierra en la propiedad estan contaminados con plomo. Muestras tomado en la área indican que hay contaminación fuera del sitio. En diciembre 1991, el servicio de bomberos del condao cerro el sitio por various violaciones de leyes.

En marzo 1992, EPA hizo un estudio preliminar del sitio. Un total de 26 muestras fueron colectados en el sitio y fuera del sitio. Las muestras indicaron que el edificio en el sitio está contaminado con plomo. Muestras de tierra tomados en el patio y en la calle tambien indicaron altos niveles de plomo.

En abril 1992, EPA tomo muestras de polvo en varios residencias en la vecindad del sitio. Estas muestra fueron tomado para determinar si hay plomo en estos residencias. Comunicaremos los resultados de estas muestras a estos residentes cuando sea disponibles.

Exposición a niveles altas de plomo es muy peligroso para niños pequenos porque ellos inges-

EPA-MANDATED
NOTIFICATION AREA

KING NEPTUNE MANUFACTURING

April/May, 1992

